

# A Framework for Understanding Poverty Part II

by Ruby K. Payne, PhD





# Characteristics of Generational Poverty

# Poverty



## Generational

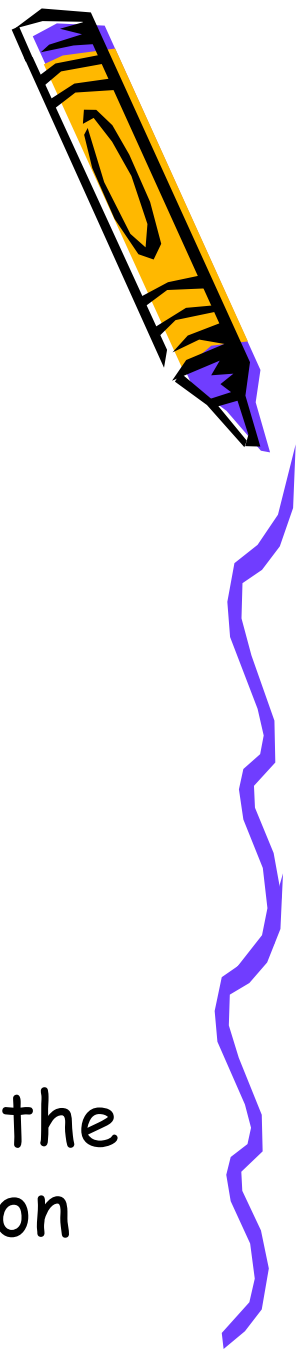
- Having been in poverty for at least two generations
  - Patterns can surface more quickly if family lives with others who are from generational poverty
- Has own culture, hidden rules, and belief system
- Prevailing attitude: society owes one a living

## Situational

- Lack of resources due to a particular event
  - death, chronic illness, divorce, etc...
- Prevailing attitude: Pride and refusal to accept charity
- More resources than generational poverty
  - More likely to use formal register



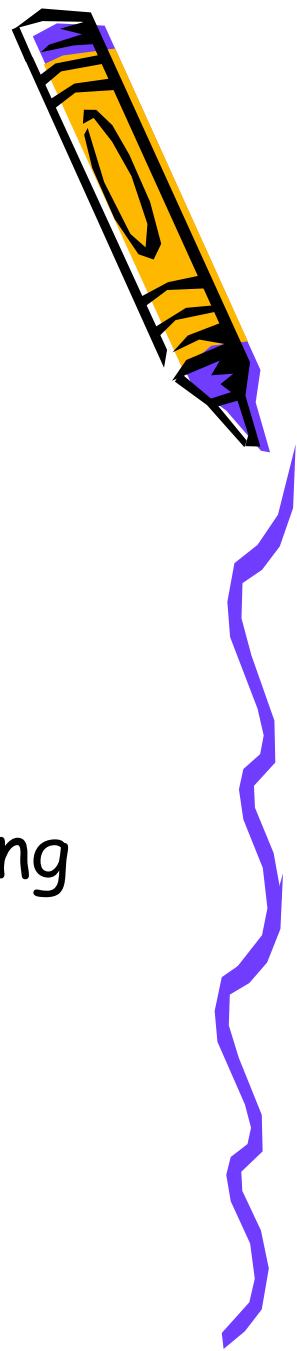
# Characteristics of Generational Poverty



- Background noise
- Importance of personality
- Significance of entertainment
- Importance of relationships
- Matriarchal structure
- Oral language tradition
- Survival orientation
- Importance of nonverbal/kinesthetic communication



# Characteristics of Generational Poverty

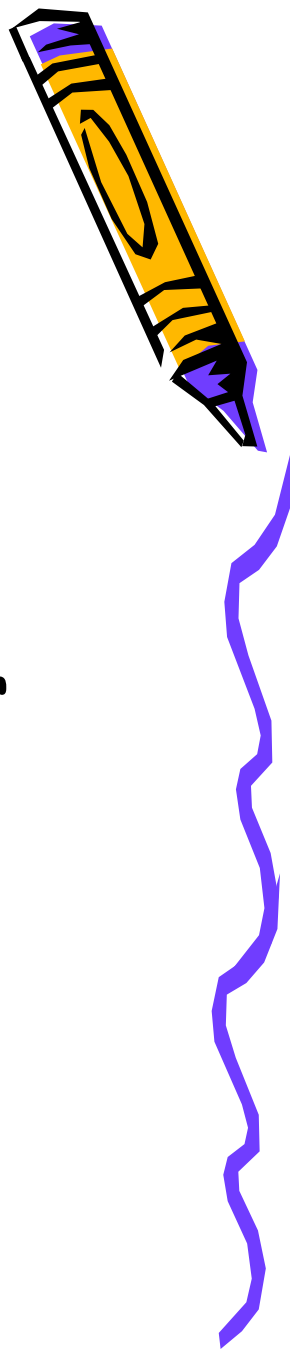


- Identity tied to lover/fighter role for men
- Identity tied to rescuer/martyr role for women
- Ownership of people
- Negative orientation
- Discipline
- Belief in fate
- Polarized thinking
- Mating dance
- Time



# Characteristics of Generational Poverty

- Sense of humor
- Lack of order/organization
- Lives in moment; does not consider future ramifications



# Family Patterns



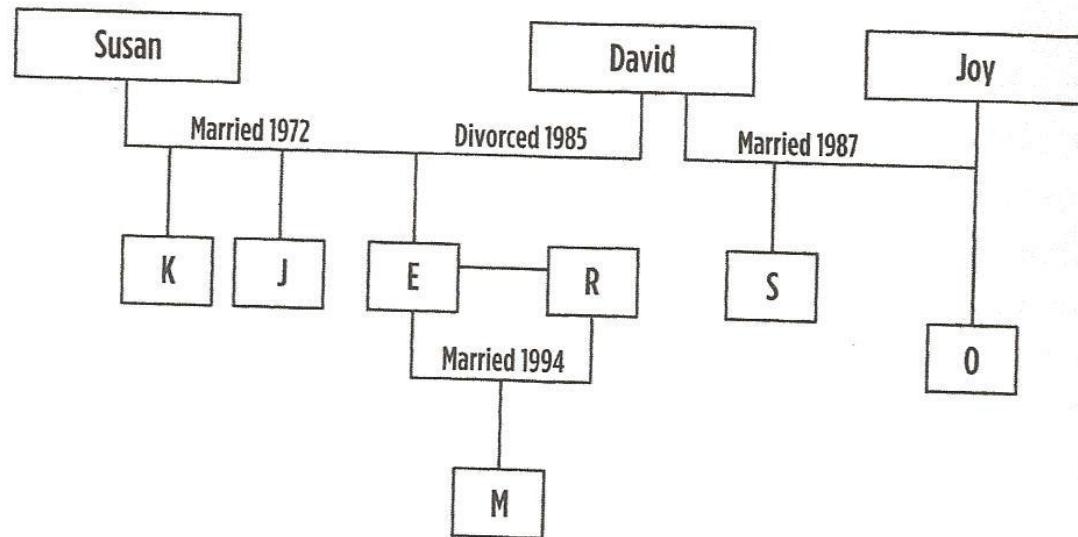
- Who helped you with your homework?
- Whom did you care most about?  
Who cared about you?
- Were relationships cooperative?  
Competitive? Both?
- Whom did you trust?
- What did you think about authority?
- What did you learn about  
relationships?



# Family Patterns: Diagram of Middle Class Family

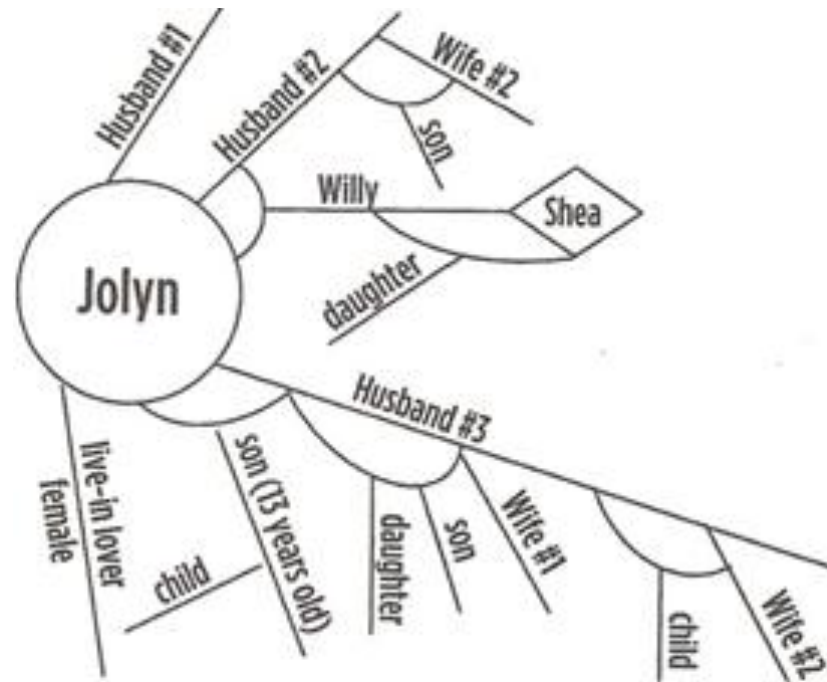


DIAGRAM OF MIDDLE-CLASS FAMILY

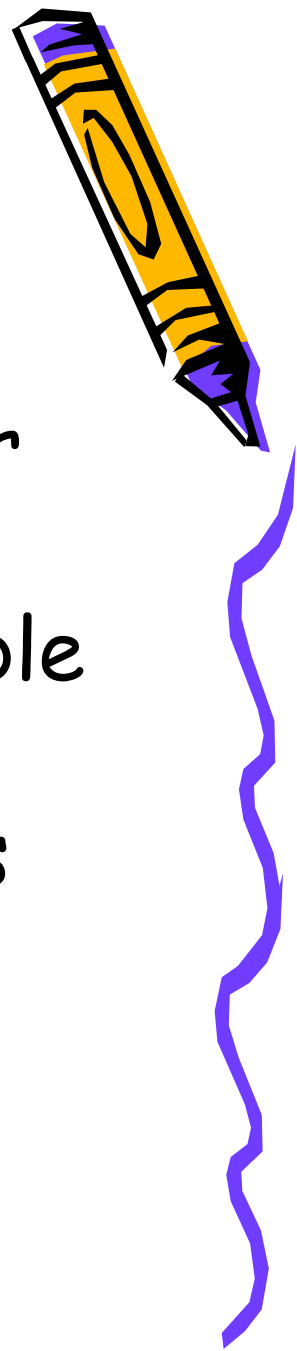




# Family Patterns: Diagram of Family from Generational Poverty



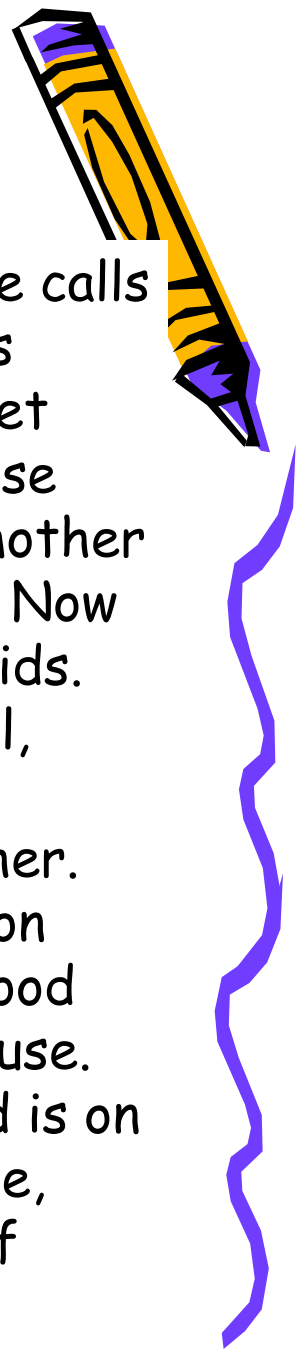
# Family Patterns: Generational Poverty



- Who children go to stay with after school, who stays with whom when there is trouble, and who is available to deal with school issues are dependent on the current alliances and relationships of the moment.



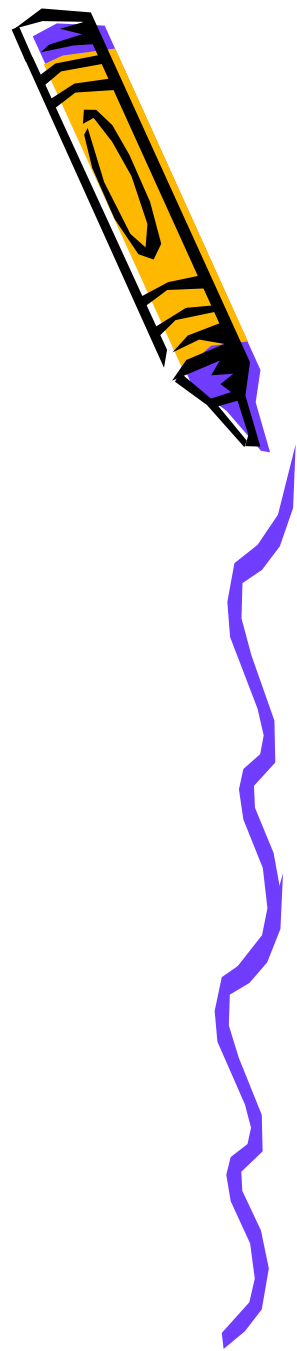
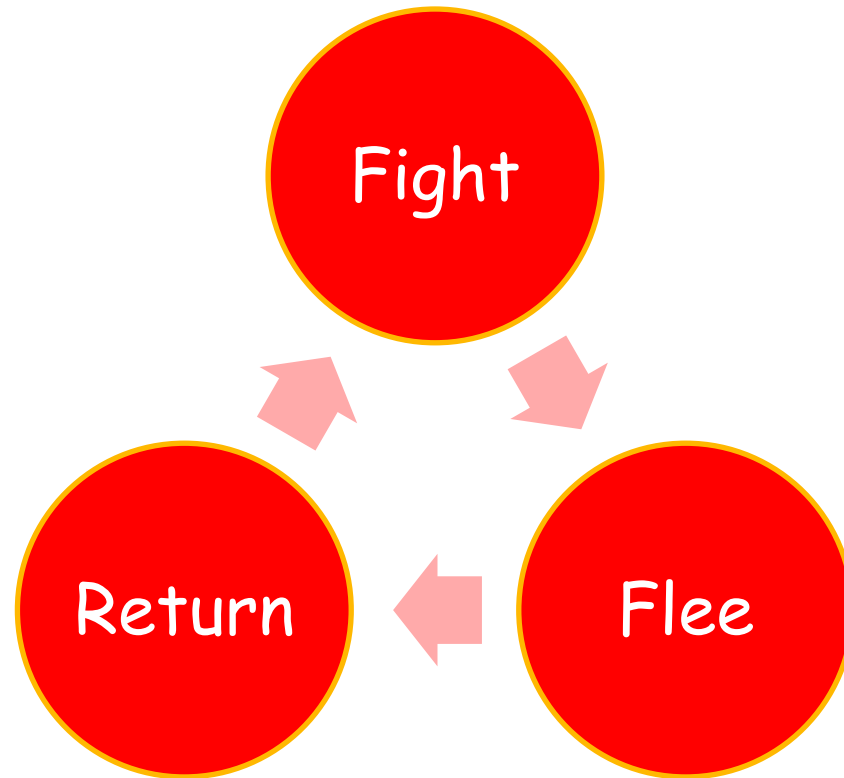
# Family Patterns: Generational Poverty



Ned comes home drunk and beats up his wife, Susan. She calls the police and escapes with the three kids to her mother's house. He goes to his mother's because she arranges to get him out of jail. His mother is not speaking to Susan because she called the cops on him and put him in jail. But Ned's mother usually keeps his kids after school until Susan gets home. Now it's Monday and Susan doesn't have anyplace to send the kids. So she tells them to go to her mother's house after school, which means they must go on a different bus because she doesn't know if Ned will show up again and be waiting for her. On Tuesday the kids go again to her mother's house. But on Wednesday Ned's mom calls Susan and tells her that no-good Ned got drunk last night and she kicked him out of her house. So now Susan and Ned's mother are good friends, and Ned is on the hot seat. So Ned goes to the apartment of his ex-wife, Jackie, because last week she decided she'd had enough of Jerry, and she was very glad to see Ned...and so the story continues...



# Generational Poverty: Male Role



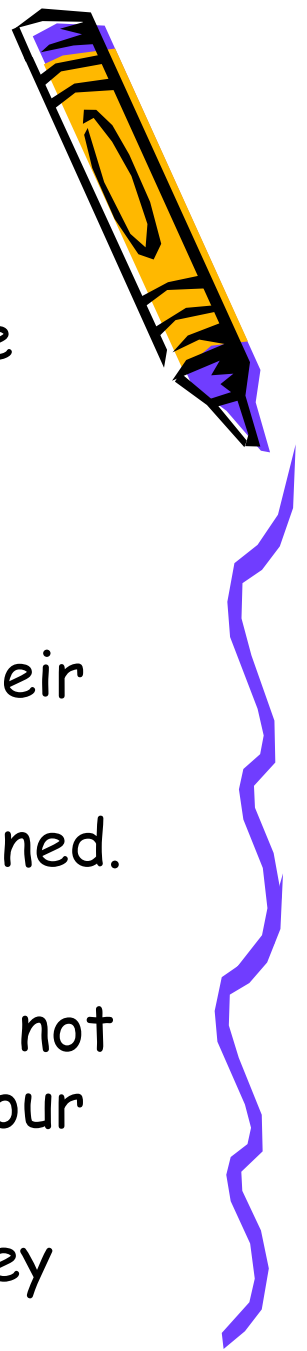
# Family Patterns: Generational Poverty



- In poverty, the multiple relationships, the nature of the male identity, the ever-changing allegiances, the favoritism, and the matriarchal structure result in a different family pattern.



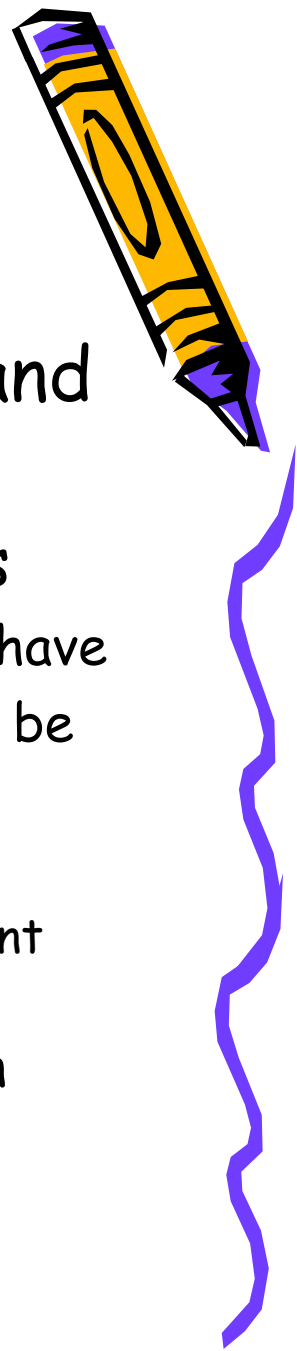
# Generational Poverty Students at School



- are disorganized, lose papers, don't have signatures.
- bring many reasons why something is missing or incomplete.
- don't do homework.
- are physically aggressive.
- don't know or use middle class courtesies.
- dislike authority.
- only do part of the assignment.
- can't seem to get started.
- can not monitor their own behavior.
- laugh when disciplined.
- talk back.
- decide whether or not they will work in your class based on whether or not they like you.



# What Does This Mean for Teachers?



- An education is the key to getting out and staying out of generational poverty.
  - Individuals leave poverty for 1 of 4 reasons
    - a goal or vision of something they want to be or have
    - a situation that is so painful that anything would be better
    - someone who sponsors them
      - educator or role model who shows them a different way or convinces them they could live differently
    - a specific talent or ability that provides them an opportunity



# What Does This Mean for Teachers?



- Being in poverty is rarely about a lack of intelligence or ability.
- Schools are virtually the only places where students can learn the choices and rules of the middle class.







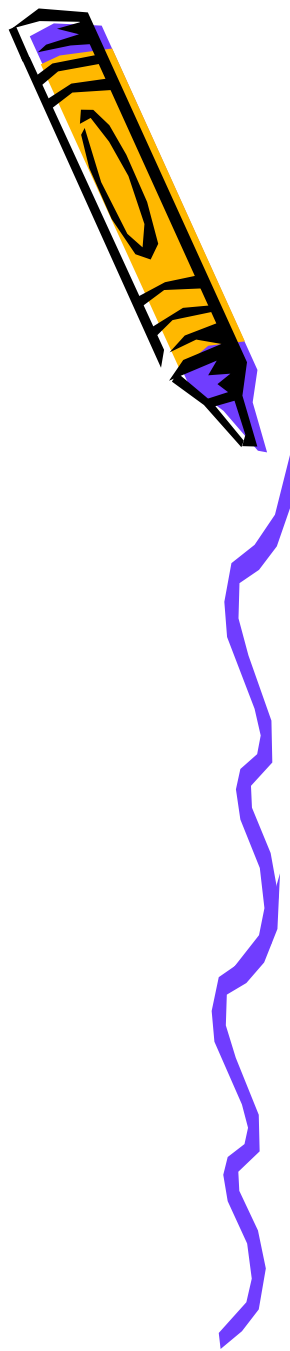
# Discipline

A Framework for Understanding  
Poverty



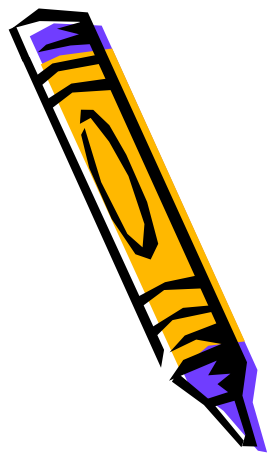
# Discipline

- In poverty, discipline is about penance and forgiveness, not necessarily change.
  - Love is unconditional.
  - Time frame is the present.

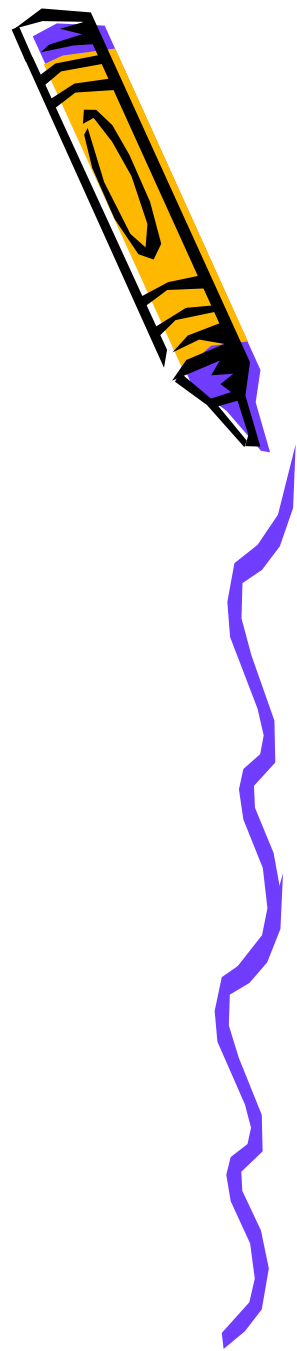


# Discipline

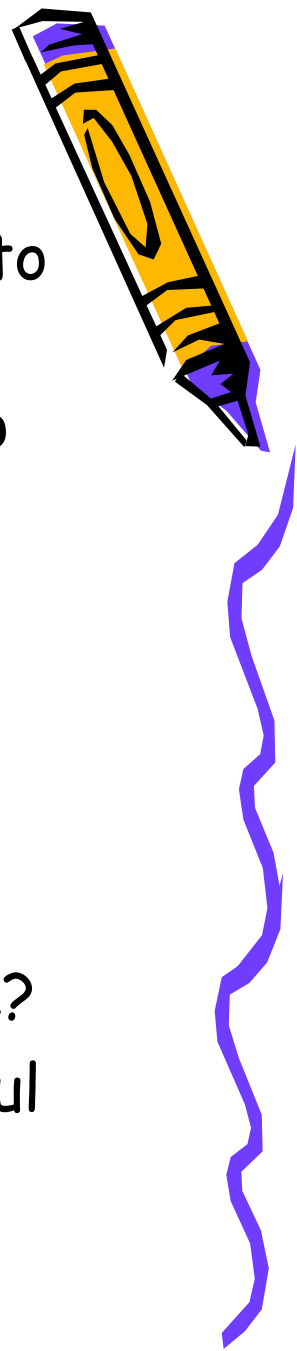
- Why the disconnect?
  - Many of the behaviors students bring to school are necessary to help them survive outside of school.
  - The culture of poverty does not provide for success in middle class because middle class requires the self-governance of behavior.



# Structure and Choice



# Behavior Analysis

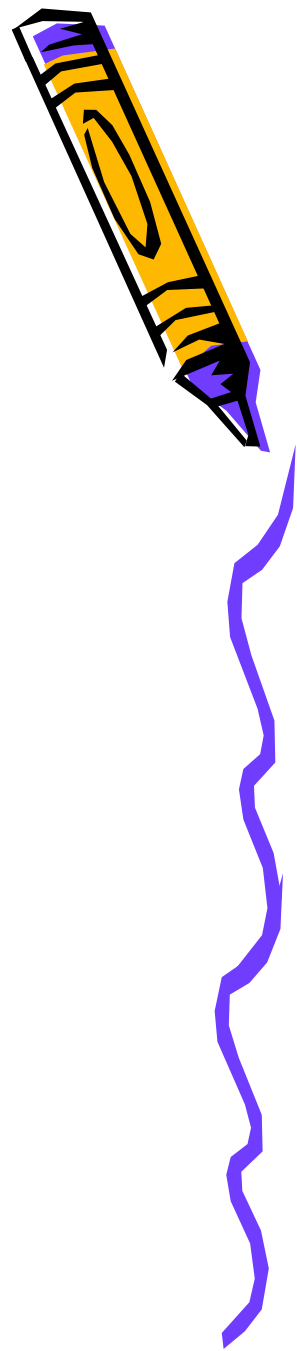


1. What kinds of behavior does the child need to be successful?
2. Does the child have the resources to develop those behaviors?
3. Will it help to contact parents?
  - Are resources available through them?
  - What resources are available through the school/district?
4. How will behaviors be taught?
5. What are other choices the child could make?
6. What will help the child repeat the successful behavior?



# Participation of the Student

1. What did you do?
2. When you did that, what did you want?
3. List four other things you could have done.
4. What will you do next time?



# The Language of Negotiation



- Child

- defensive, victimized, whining, losing attitude, strongly negative non-verbal
  - Quit picking on me. You don't love me. He did it. You're ugly. Nobody likes you.

- Parent

- authoritative, directive, judgmental, evaluative, win-lose mentality, punitive
  - It's wrong to do.... That's ridiculous. Life's not fair. Get busy. You are good (bad, worthless)

- Adult

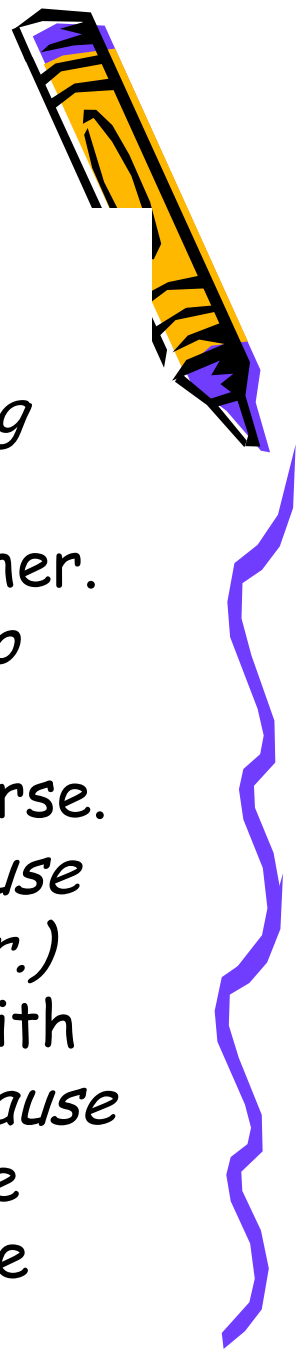
- non-judgmental, free of negative non-verbal, factual, often in question format, attitude of win-win



In what ways could this be resolved? What are your choices in this situation? I am comfortable (uncomfortable) with...I would like to recommend... We agree to disagree.

# Using Metaphor Stories

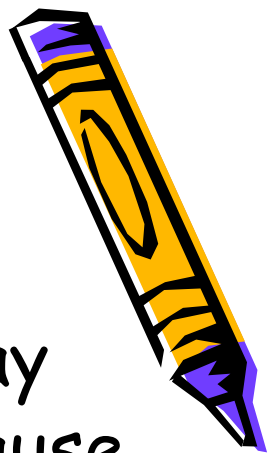
"Once there was a girl who went to the nurse's office. Why did she go to the nurse's office? *(Because she thought there was something wrong with her.)* So the girl went to the nurse's office because she thought something was wrong with her. Did the nurse find anything wrong with her? *(No she did not.)* So the nurse did not find anything wrong with her, but the girl kept going to the nurse. Why did the girl keep going to the nurse? *(Because she thought there was something wrong with her.)* Why did she think there was something wrong with her? *(Because she saw a show on TV...)* {Once cause is identified, story ends on positive note} So she went to the doctor and he gave her tests and she was perfectly fine."



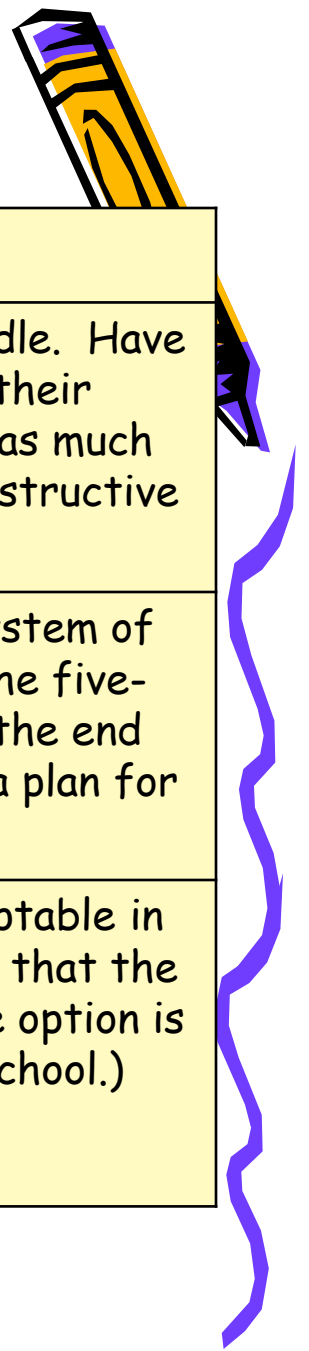


# Teaching Hidden Rules

- "Do you use the same set of rules to play all computer games? No, you don't because you would lose. The same is true at school. There are street rules and there are school rules. Each set of rules helps you be successful wherever you go. So at school, laughing when being disciplined is not a choice. It doesn't help you be successful. It only buys you more trouble. Keep a straight face and look sorry even if you don't feel that way."



# Discipline Strategies



Behavior Related to Poverty	Intervention
<b>Hands always on someone else.</b> <i>Poverty has a heavy reliance on nonverbal data and touch.</i>	Allow students to draw or doodle. Have them hold their hands behind their backs when in line. Give them as much to do with their hands in a constructive way.
<b>Extremely disorganized.</b> <i>Lack of planning, scheduling or prioritizing skills. Not taught in poverty. Also, probably does not have a place for things at home so they can be found.</i>	Teach a simple, color-coded system of classroom organization. Use the five-finger method for memory at the end of the day. Ask Ss to create a plan for their own organization.
<b>Physically fights.</b> <i>Necessary to survive in poverty. Only knows the language of survival. Does not have the language or belief system to use conflict resolution. Sees himself as less of a man if he does not fight.</i>	Stress that fighting is unacceptable in school. Examine other options that the S can live with at school. (One option is not to settle the business at school.)



# What Does This Mean for Teachers?



- Students from poverty need to have at least two sets of behaviors
  - Street and school
- The purpose of discipline should be to promote successful behaviors at school.
- Teaching students to use adult voice (the language of negotiation) is important for success in and out of school and can be an alternative to physical aggression.
- Structure and choice need to be a part of the discipline approach.
- Discipline should be used and seen as a form of instruction.

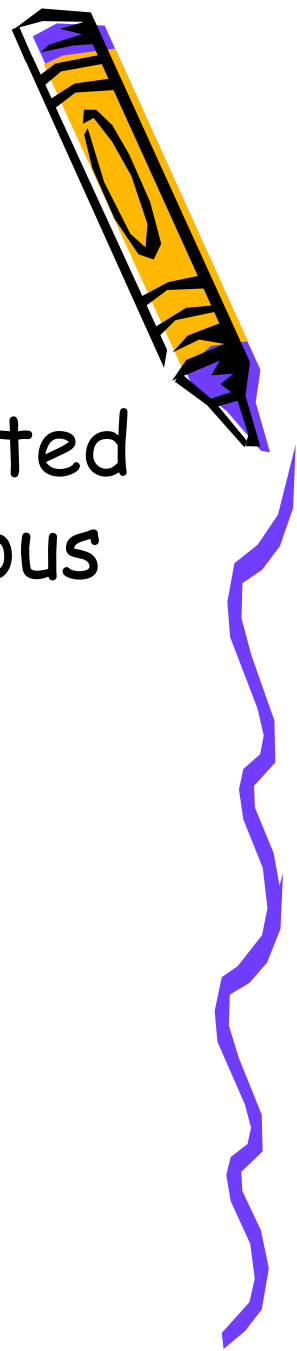




# Instruction and Improving Achievement

A Framework for Understanding  
Poverty

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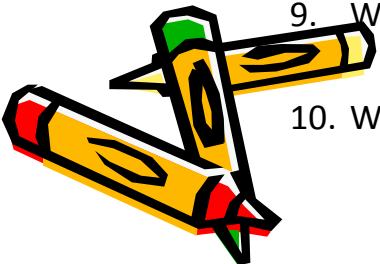
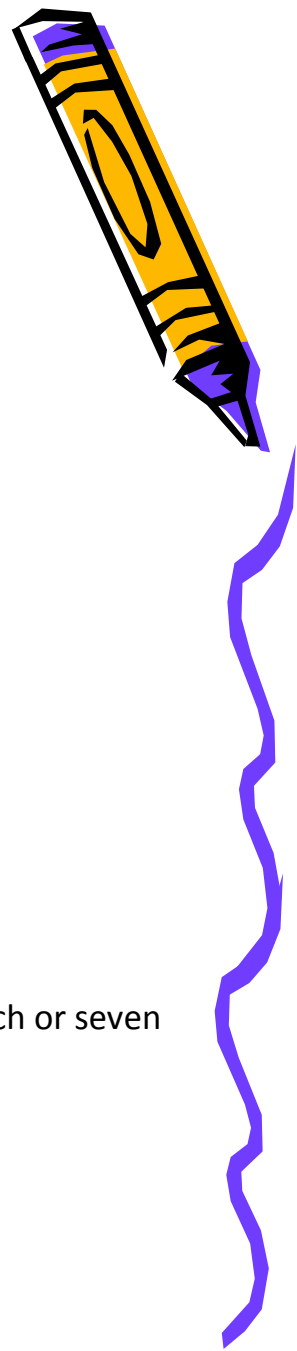


- Low achievement is closely correlated with lack of resources, and numerous studies have documented the correlation between low socioeconomic status and low achievement.
  - Hodgkinson, 1995

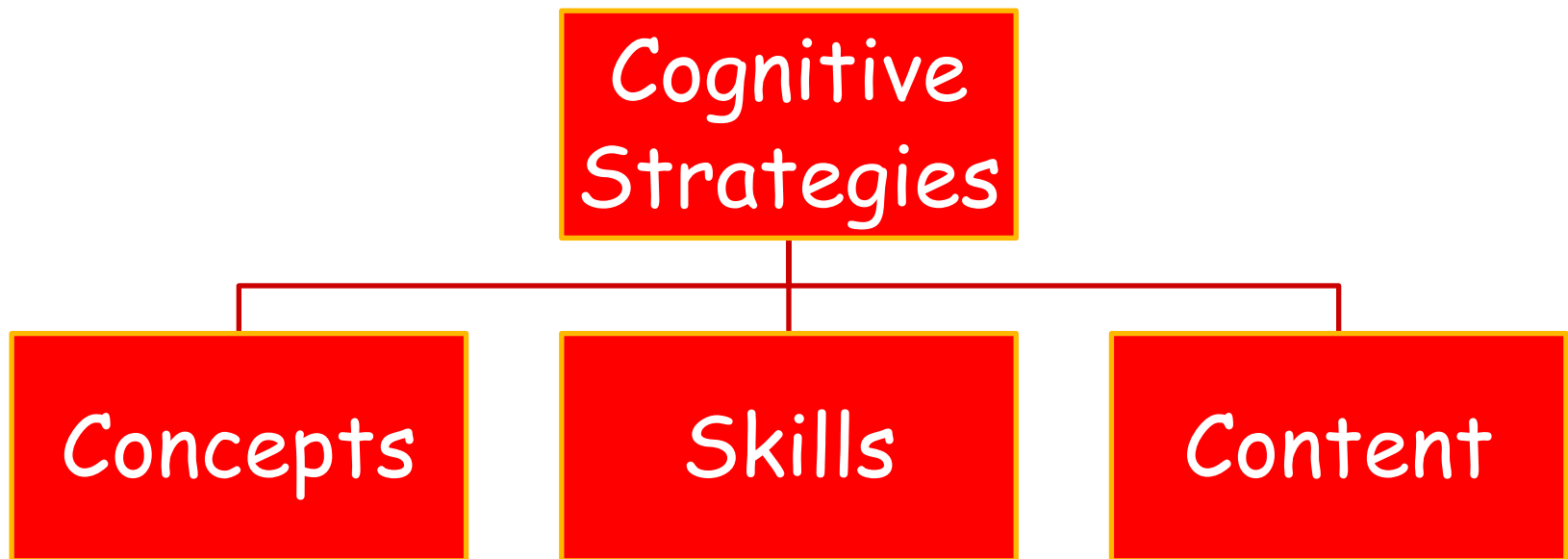


# IQ Test

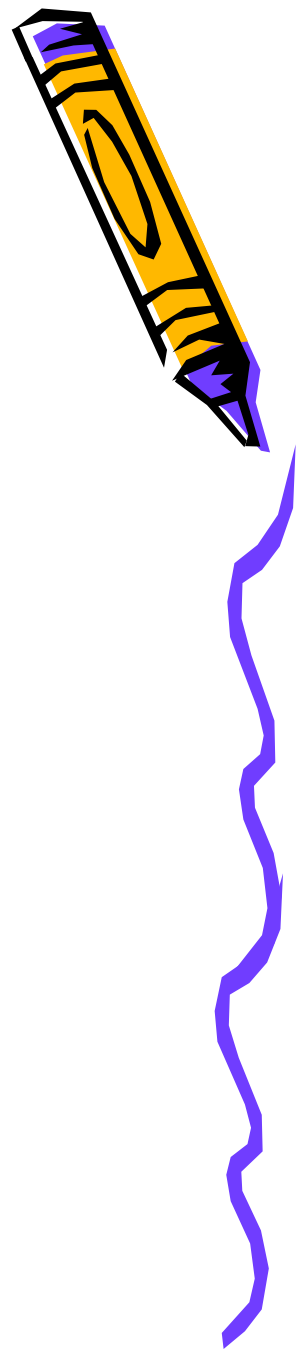
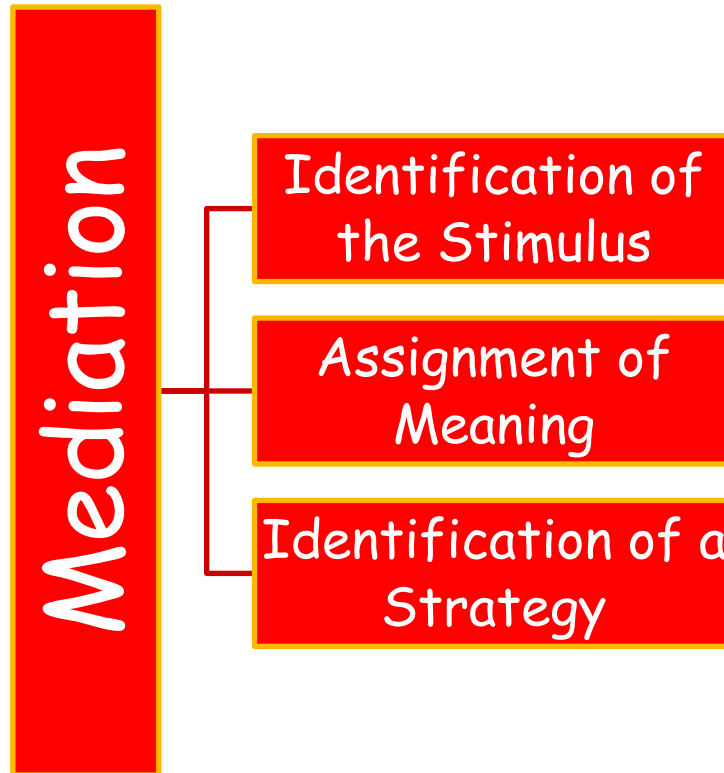
1. What is gray tape and what is it used for?
2. What does dissed mean?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of moving often?
4. What is the main kind of work that a bondsman does?
5. What is a roach?
6. How are a pawnshop and a convenience store alike? How are they different?
7. Why is it important for a non-US citizen to have a green card?
8. You go to the bakery store. You can buy five loaves of day-old bread for 39 cents each or seven loaves of three-day-old bread for 28 cents each. Which choice will cost less?
9. What does deportation mean?
10. What is the difference between a marriage and a common law relationship?



# Learning Structures



# Cognitive Strategies





# Why is Mediation Important?

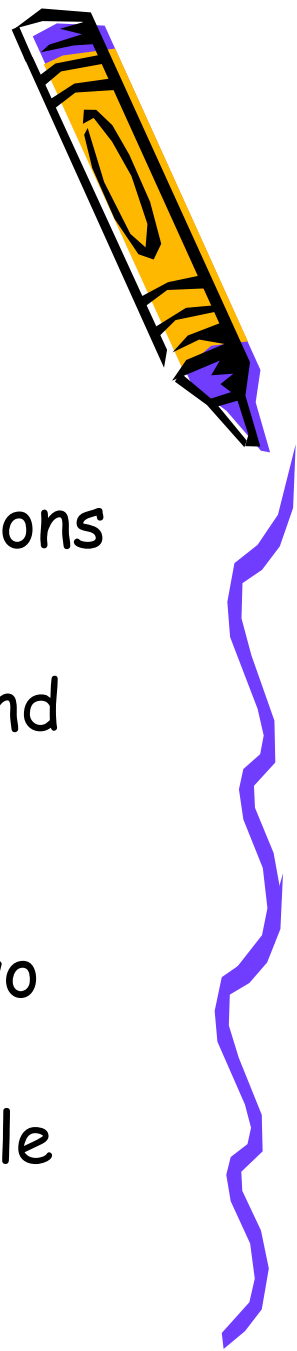


- If an individual depends on random, episodic story structure for memory patterns, lives in an unpredictable environment, and has not developed the ability to plan, then...
- If she cannot plan, she cannot predict.
- If he cannot predict, he cannot identify cause and effect.
- If she can't identify cause and effect, she cannot identify consequence.
- If he can't identify consequence, he cannot control impulsivity.
- If she can't control impulsivity, she has an inclination toward criminal behavior.



# Cognitive Issues

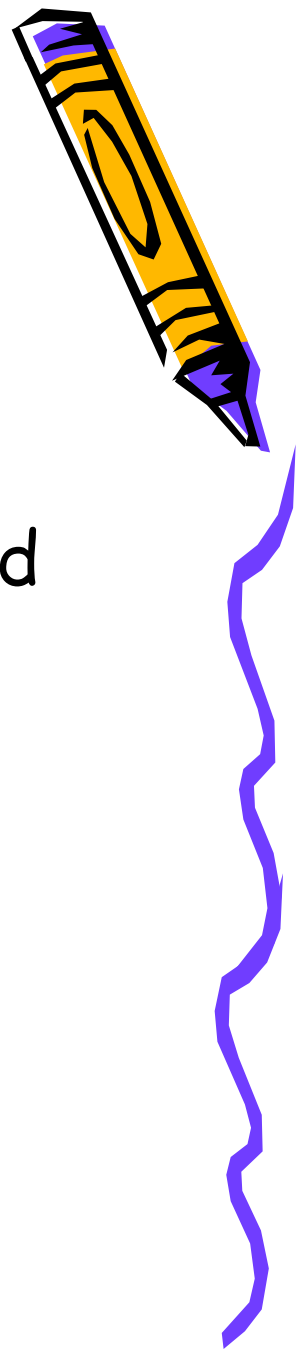
## Caused by Missing Mediation



- Blurred and sweeping perceptions and the lack of a systematic method of exploration
- Impaired verbal tools
- Impaired spatial orientation
- Impaired temporal orientation
- Impaired observations of constancies
- Lack of precision and accuracy in data gathering
- Inability to hold two objects or sources inside the mind while comparing and contrasting



# Cognitive Strategies That Must Be Built



- Input
  - Quantity and quality of data gathered
- Elaboration
  - Use of the data
- Output
  - Communication of the data



# Input Strategies



- Use planning behaviors
- Focus on perception of specific stimulus
- Control impulsivity
- Explore data systematically
- Use appropriate and accurate labels
- Organize space with stable systems of reference
- Orient data in time
- Identify constancies across variations
- Gather precise and accurate data
- Consider two sources of information at once
- Organize data (parts of a whole)
- Visually transport data



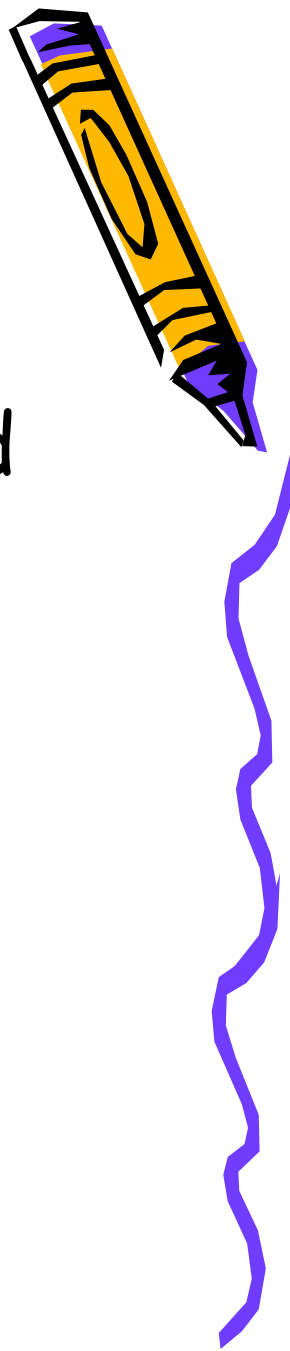
# Elaboration

- Identify and define the problem
- Select relevant clues
- Compare data
- Select appropriate categories of time
- Summarize data
- Project relationships of data
- Use logical data
- Test hypotheses
- Build inferences
- Make a plan using the data
- Use appropriate labels
- Use data systematically

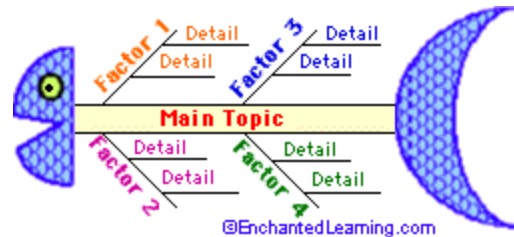
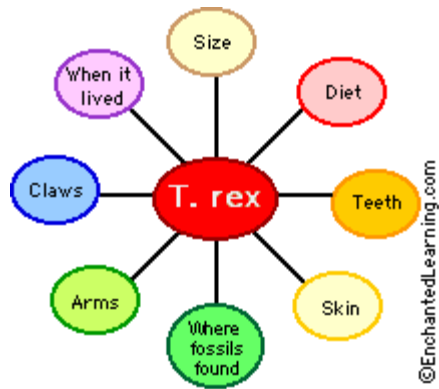


# Output

- Communicate clearly the labels and the process
- Visually transport data correctly
- Use precise and accurate language
- Control impulsive behavior



# Graphic Organizers



# Providing a Systematic Approach to Data

Place the following symbols in the text where you find the answers:

©= Who

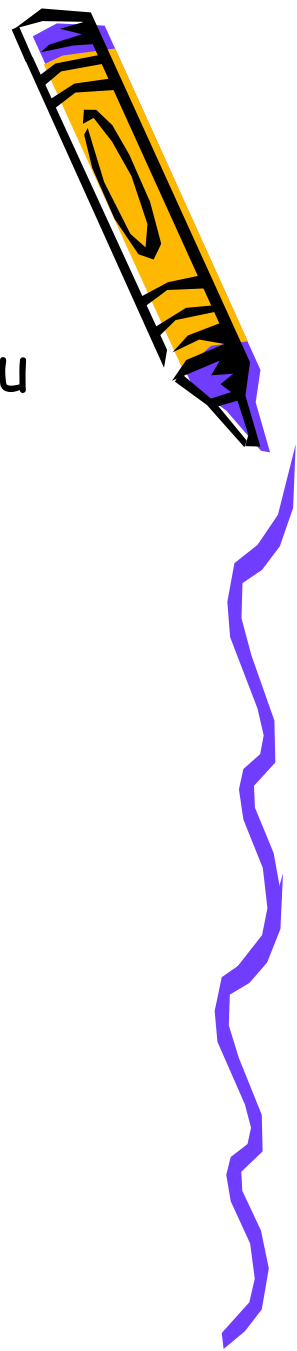
😊 Where

➡= What

y = Why

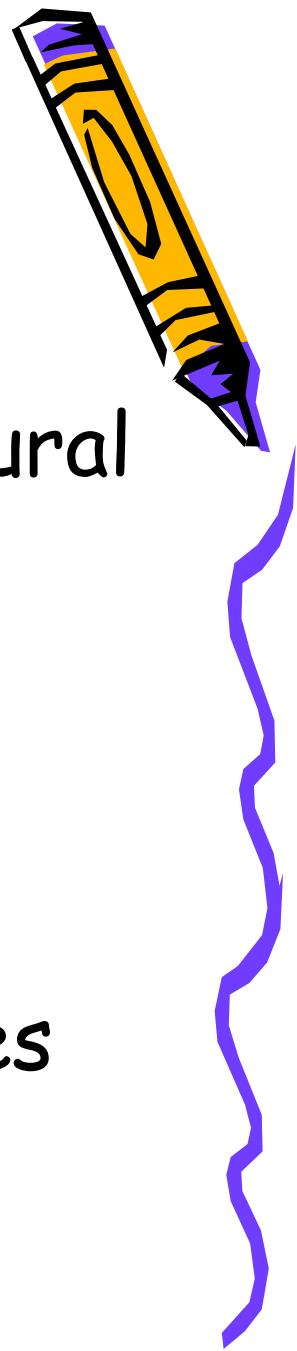
X = When

H = How





# Other Strategies

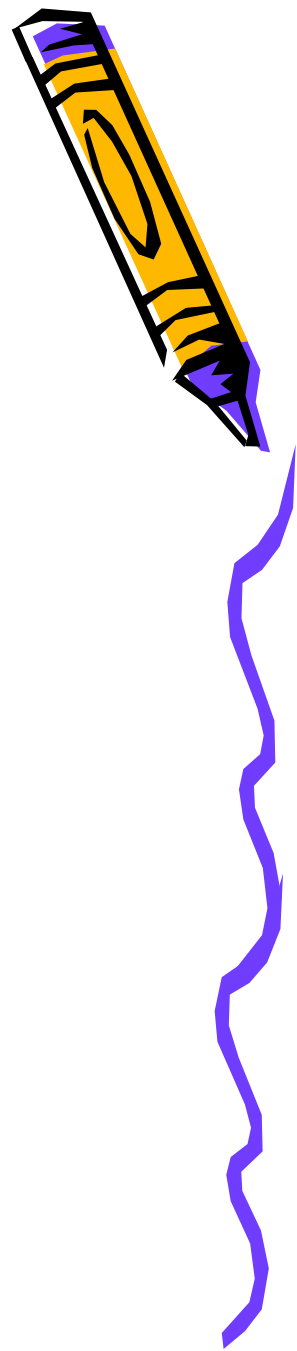


- Establish Goal Setting and Procedural Self Talk
- Use a Kinesthetic Approach
- Use Rubrics
- Teach Questioning Stems
- Sort Relevant from Irrelevant Cues



# Three Magic Words

- Insistence
- Expectations
- Support
  - cognitive strategies,
  - appropriate relationships,
  - coping strategies,
  - goal-setting opportunities, and
  - appropriate instruction both in content and discipline



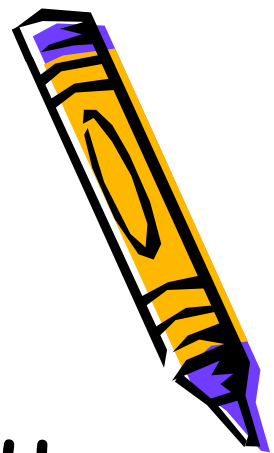
"The true discrimination that comes out of poverty is the lack of cognitive strategies. Lack of these unseen attributes handicaps in every aspect of life the individual who does not have them."



# Creating Relationships

"Locate a resilient kid and you will also find a caring adult - or several - who has guided him."

*Invincible Kids*, US News and World Report



# Covey's Emotional Bank Account



## Deposits

- Seek first to understand
- Keeping promises
- Kindnesses, courtesies
- Clarifying expectations
- Loyalty to the absent
- Apologies
- Open to feedback

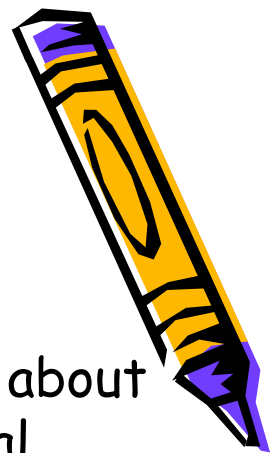


## Withdrawals

- Seek first to be understood
- Breaking promises
- Unkindnesses, discourtesies
- Violating expectations
- Disloyalty, duplicity
- Pride, conceit, arrogance
- Rejecting feedback



# How Does This Apply to Students in Poverty?



## Deposits

- Appreciation for humor and entertainment
- Acceptance of what the individual cannot say about a person or situation
- Respect for the demands and priorities of relationships
- Using the adult voice
- Assisting with goal setting
- Identifying options related to available resources
- Understanding the importance of personal freedom, speech, and individual personality

## Withdrawals

- Put downs or sarcasm about the humor or individual
- Insistence and demands for full explanation about a person or situation
- Insistence on middle class view of relationships
- Using the parent voice
- Telling the individual his goals
- Making judgments on the availability of resources
- Assigning pejorative character traits to the individual



# What Should You Take From This?



- Educators may need to grieve as they teach and work with those in poverty
  - Anger, denial, bargaining, depression, and acceptance
- Role is not to save the person from themselves, but rather to offer a support system, role models, and opportunities to learn, which will increase the likelihood of success.



# What Should You Take From This?

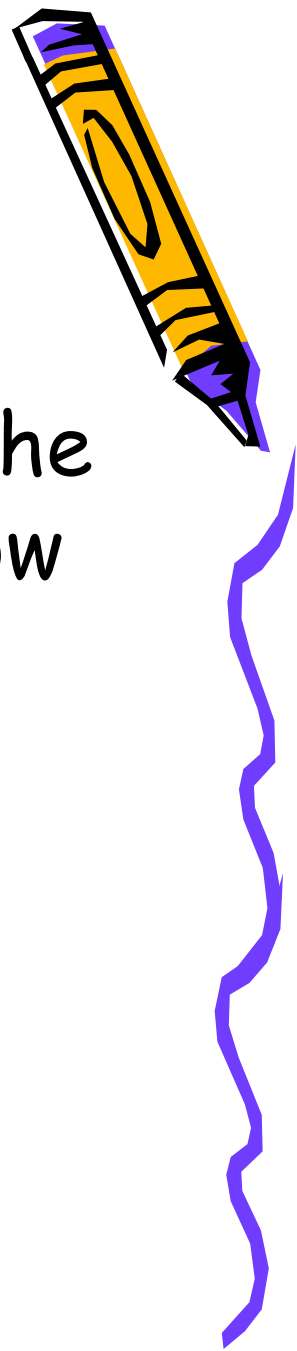


- Leave our middle class notion that if the poor had a choice they would live differently
  - Even with financial resources, not every individual would choose to live differently
    - Freedom of verbal expression, an appreciation of personality, a heightened and intense emotional experience, and a sensual, kinesthetic approach to life not usually found in middle class





# What Should You Take From This?



- It is your responsibility to teach the differences and skills that will allow the individual to make the choice.

